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HOME MAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, June 28, 1939

(For Broadcast Use Only)

SUBJECT: "TIPS FOR THE FAMILY FOOD-SHOPPER." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

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Once again the family food-shopper has the attention today. For once again the news is about supplies and prices of seasonal foods now coming to market.

The weather has changed some of the food prospects reported to you two weeks ago. It looks now as if supplies of certain foods would be smaller this summer than a year ago, but no shortage of food is in prospect.

The trouble has been lack of rainfall in certain areas that produce many of our spring and summer vegetables. And then poor growing conditions and less land planted to wheat will probably mean a smaller wheat crop this year than last. But nobody anticipates any shortage in wheat since large supplies have been carried over from last year's crop. Because of poor range and pasture conditions along with prospects for smaller feed crops, some farmers are sending cattle to market that ordinarily they would keep for marketing later in the season or for breeding. Last year because so many farmers kept their cattle for restocking herds, smaller supplies of meat came on the market.

Now a little news of fruit crops. Fruit crops apparently haven't suffered from the weather so you can expect a good deal of fruit on the market this summer. We'll probably have more apples, peaches, cherries, apricots and plums this summer, but fewer pears, grapes, dried prunes and oranges. We'll have about the same amount of early peaches from the Southern States as last year but many more of the late peaches. In California where most of the peaches are used for canning or drying, they're expecting a big crop, too. And the apricot and cherry crops this

year are expected to be the largest on record. This should be a banner year for cherry pie because the big increase in the cherry crop is sour cherries. Right now all of the fruits I've mentioned are moving to market in carload lots.

Now here's some butter news. Butter prices are already on the way up. Dry weather is cutting down butter production. However, unless the drought becomes more severe, butter production this summer will be nearly as large as the high level last summer. And because so much butter is in storage, the total supplies of butter may be larger than last year. June is the month when the most butter is made. After that the trend is downward.

Now for a little poultry news. Two weeks ago the predictions were for much more poultry on the market than last summer. Now it looks as if we may not have as much of an increase as predicted. Because poultry and egg prices have not gone up as much as feed prices have, there has been a recent curtailment in hatchings. Poultry supplies usually increase seasonally during the last half of the year. Marketings of broilers and fryers usually are at their seasonal high point in the summer.

Now about eggs. The outlook still is for larger supplies than in 1938 but for a gradual drop in supplies for the rest of this year. Because egg prices have been so low, the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation began to purchase eggs in May for distribution to people on relief.

As for meat, more meat has come on the market lately because poor pasture and range conditions have made farmers sell more cattle. Ordinarily in July more lamb and better grade beef comes on the market while less pork is for sale. This year not so much more better-grade beef will be selling but more pork. The lamb situation is a little uncertain but probably more lamb than usual will be coming to market this month. If drought conditions should become severe, marketings of

meat during the next few months might be somewhat larger.

Most of the potatoes on the market now are new potatoes. But this summer we probably won't have so many new potatoes as we had last year. The exception is California where they are having a big crop of potatoes--larger than the one they had last year.

Every housewife who goes shopping for her family will be wise to remember the 8 foods that Secretary Wallace has listed as surplus agricultural commodities at the present time. For these 8 foods are especially abundant and they should be good buys for everyone. So now, if you are interested in planning economical meals remember: butter, eggs, corn meal, wheat and graham flour, dried prunes, oranges and grapefruit, and dry beans. And also keep your eyes open for other foods that may be abundant in your locality so may be selling at bargain prices.

That's all the food shopping news today. I'll have more to report about market prices and supplies in a couple of weeks.

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